

Leslie Abrams Bio

The Honorable Leslie J. Abrams is a United States District Court Judge for the Middle District of Georgia. On March 11, 2014, President Obama nominated her to the bench; and on November 18, 2014, the Senate confirmed her by a vote of 100-0. On November 21, 2014, Judge Abrams took the oath of office and became first female federal judge in the Middle District of Georgia and the first African American woman to become an Article III federal judge in the State of Georgia.

Judge Abrams grew up in Gulfport, Mississippi and Atlanta, Georgia. She is the daughter of two United Methodist ministers and the third of six children. She received a joint bachelor's degree in Public Policy and African American Studies from Brown University in 1997 and received her JD from Yale Law School in 2002. Following graduation from law school, Judge Abrams clerked for the Honorable Marvin J. Garbis on the United States District Court for the District of Maryland. Following her clerkship, she joined the DC office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, LLP. In 2010, Judge Abrams became an Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia.

As a daughter of two ministers, justice and public service have always been a part of Judge Abrams' life. Most recently, as an Assistant United States Attorney, Judge Abrams was honored to be a federal prosecutor and to seek justice for crime victims. She was especially honored to work on behalf of the most vulnerable victims; and, to that end, prosecuted cases involving human trafficking and child exploitation. Judge Abrams (as co-counsel with Susan Coppedge, now the United States Ambassador to Monitor and Combat Human Trafficking) counts among her greatest achievements securing a sex-trafficking conviction of a couple who forced a 17 year old refugee from Sierre Leon into prostitution.

In addition to her duties as a prosecutor, Judge Abrams also formerly served as the Community Outreach Coordinator for the U.S. Attorney's Office, developing programs focused on community education, crime prevention and prisoner reentry. In this position, she frequently spoke to schools, churches, and community groups about human trafficking, child exploitation, elder abuse, discrimination, and community safety.

Throughout her career, Judge Abrams also worked to secure the rights of disenfranchised people. In 1998, Leslie became the Consumer Protection Fellow at the Greenling Institute, a multi-ethnic public policy, research, and advocacy institute whose mission is to represent the interests of low-income and minority citizens. During her legal career, Judge Abrams represented clients who were the victims of lending scams targeting low income and elderly Americans, including a young woman who was being threatened with eviction from her family home as a result of a mortgage flipping scam and an 82 year-old home owner who, despite obtaining a reverse mortgage to pay for tens of thousands of dollars for repairs to her home, was forced to live without heat and electricity and with gaping holes in her home. Both victims were victorious and able to remain in their homes.

Since taking the bench, Judge Abrams has continued her community work in human trafficking by speaking to youth groups and attending the Vatican's Judges' Summit against Human Trafficking and Organized Crime and through working with a local mentorship program for girls.